

LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

March 2021: No. 548

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains: In Praise of Hymns – J. M. Neale; A Personal View on: A Lockdown Lent; An Extraordinary Annunciation; Quarantine Quatrains; CCHP News; Garden News plus the usual Vicar's letter, daily intentions for prayer and more.

From the Vicar

4th March 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When we reopened for Sunday worship and put up the first, 11.30am, Mass on Eventbrite it sold out in under the hour. By Wednesday the second, 9.30am, Mass was also fully-booked. I'm encouraged by this desire for the Eucharist (or, maybe, frankly, just to have something to do!) and have very much missed seeing people on Sunday mornings. Yet I am also conscious that if we can have all 60-odd spaces booked so quickly there will be many of you unable to come on Sunday. All I can do at this stage is urge you to come midweek or on Saturday mornings where there is no need to book in and there is plenty of space. It is, I know, not the Lord's Day but in these circumstances I think a certain latitude is allowed.

This is a concrete example of a general concern that is going to grow over the next few months as more and more people are vaccinated, and infection, hospitalisation and death rates continue to decline and yet things are not opened up or relaxed. At what stage will congregational singing – if only through masks – be allowed, or coffee after Mass? I suspect our impatience for normality will grow. Yet while the physical threat from Ovid-19 recedes, the economic, emotional and psychological impact will be being revealed. No-one has been unaffected by this last year, and many have suffered grievously, not least in the way the (necessary) lockdown has exacerbated mental health troubles or made the treatment of other ailments more difficult or even impossible.

Over the last twelve months we've been streaming the Office of Evening Prayer each day. Before Covid the Offices were attended by a handful of people; now, on line, it is a rare day when Evening Prayer hasn't had over forty 'views'. Together with so much of these months being without congregational Communion, many more people have taken to praying some form of daily or weekly Office. Consequently plenty of you have been freshly exposed to the psalms. The psalms were Israel's hymnbook, traditionally ascribed to King

David, and are an extraordinary mixture of praise and complaint, joy and lamentation, hope and dejection, love and hate. Sometimes it is God speaking to humans, sometimes humans speaking to God, and sometimes people speaking about other people. As Christians we read and pray them both in order to hear the voice of Jesus in the psalms ('My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?') but also to give voice to our own feelings and desires.

The wonderful thing about the psalms is that they are not sugar-coated; and the way in which one psalm can go from lament to praise, from joy to dejection in a few verses, echoes our own fickle feelings. The psalmist thinks everyone is against him, God has abandoned her, and there's no justice in the world; and then sees that the wicked are punished, he will be able to return to the Temple to worship and God is her rock and salvation.

This Lent and Passiontide we can let these psalms not only speak the words of Jesus as He makes His way to the Cross but also let them speak our words – words of contradiction and outrage, hope and joy, anger and impatience. We will find ourselves in different places over these coming weeks, with some of us still anxious and not yet vaccinated, suffering from mental or other ailments, while others will be bursting with anticipation and just wanting to get back to all that we used to do. We will need to be patient with one another and bring all our various thoughts and feelings into our prayers. The psalms will be marvellous for this, and this season of the Lord's Passion is ideally suited to our sense of impatience, lament and loss.

This year we will at least be able to have Holy Week services in church, even if numbers will be very limited and I will have to ask you to ration yourself to a few so that everyone can get to something. With the aid of the psalms, with prayer and patience, we will nonetheless reach the joy both of Easter and the end of lockdown.

With love and prayers, I am, yours ever in the Passion
of the Lord

Fr Robert.



A Personal View on ... Lent in Lockdown

by Emma Lloyd-Jones

And so, as I write, it is the morning of Ash Wednesday. A time of hopeful contemplation, contrite hearts, communication with God; a time to ‘hunker down’ as the contemporary phrase goes.

In the beautiful words of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* today’s Collect (to be repeated each day throughout Lent) appeals to ‘Almighty and Everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all

them that are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite hearts’ and continues ‘that we may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.’

However outwardly serious and possibly gloomy Lent may perhaps seem (ashes, no flowers in churches, fasting, extra prayer, and the opportunity to reach out to others and give alms), without wishing to sound smug or improving, this is an **opportunity**. At least, that is how it has been put across to me in the past, and now, and will be probably in future Lenten seasons. It is an opportunity to try to renew, and be re-newed. After the darkness, we will hopefully really be prepared for the apogee of the Christian year, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ at Easter.

The Lent Collect is a kind of companion to the Advent Collect, when we pray ‘Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast aside the

works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light'. Armour: used to **fight**. Living in the world is not easy, and we all (particularly in our tragic Covid-ridden world), have to fight, in one way or another.

In my own personal experience (on many scores, but principally that of lengthy and tedious illness), and I think in the way many of us are encouraged to think – one often cannot experience or appreciate the **light** unless one has experienced the **dark**. The light shines more convincingly, stronger, more symbolically and is generally more significant if contrasted with whatever dark there might have been before. Put simply: it can be appreciated.

Light, and its symbolic significance, is a recurrent theme in many religions. The Hindus and Sikhs celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Light; the Jews celebrate Hanukkah (which means 'dedication' in Hebrew but which is often also called The Festival of Lights); the Muslims, Eid al-Fitr when some homes are decorated with lanterns, twinkling lights or flowers, again after a period of austerity with the highly disciplined fasting in Ramadan. These are but four of the major world religions. I am sure the message of all this is pretty clear.

In our own tradition of Christianity, the lighting of personal candles as a form of prayer is a treasured and prevalent tradition. The flickering flame has a beauty and life of its own, and the 'ritual' of this gesture has been a strong and significant symbol for centuries in many Catholic and Orthodox countries.

And so to Lent as a period of possible darkness. I am sure that many will consider this Lent, 2021, as being a time of particular darkness and potential despair. Since March 2020 there have been numerous restrictions placed on our lives, worldwide, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are tragedies, and there are frustrations, and there is serious worldwide disruption to life as we experienced it before the virus hit.

It is difficult to list all the disruption, disaster and distress. But we all know of medical tragedies, to both patients and medical staff; we all probably by now know of losses and acute difficulties experienced by people we know; there is the really frightening political and economic turmoil; there is educational chaos and uncertainty; businesses, both large and small, are going to the wall. But one of the most mourned on a daily basis is the social isolation experienced by many – including, of course, in our Church with the disruption of the formerly constant and welcome ‘anchor’ of worship at LSM. People are missing out on their grandchildren growing up; people are not able to meet their friends; cultural and sporting and social activities are curtailed.

Not only is there immense frustration but also there is great anxiety. Anxiety about the nature of the Coronavirus and obviously not wishing to contract it; anxieties about family situations and relationships; there are myriad anxieties but there is also the phenomenal anxiety about the impossibility of being able to **plan** anything.

There appears to be virtually **no certainty**. This is disconcerting. **And yet** – is this a kind of obscure challenge to our Faith? Does it, in a rather bizarre but simple way, encourage us to nurture and treasure our Faith more? Could this Lent, a time of necessary isolation, be a time of deeper prayer? Can we create something rather wonderful as we traverse along what seems to be a particularly grim and dark tunnel? After all, there are singularly few distractions - a difficulty for many, I appreciate; but I am trying to ‘look on the bright side’ here!

Having been brought up by a strict mother who always encouraged me to ‘count my blessings’ in a rather infuriating way when everything appeared to be collapsing around me, perhaps I will take a leaf out of her book (she died in 2008) and try to see the symbolism of these words.

I also find very beautiful, from our Common Worship Morning Prayer:

‘The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.’

Silence is kept.

‘As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.’

During the night, we rest; we should emerge in the morning refreshed and repaired and restored. My Godfather once pointed out to me that fallow fields in the deep winter were ‘resting’. Their rather dark and dismal appearance was preparing them to flourish with produce in warmer climes. I am sure the symbolism here also is clear.

Perhaps we can use a more restricted, Locked-Down, Lent to try and rejoice that we have more **time** to consider the things we are asked to do: fast, pray and give alms; but personally I would say prayer may benefit particularly, however unpopular a view this may be! Hopefully, one day – before too long – the Light **will** shine, extra strongly. And we shall, hopefully, share – and rejoice in – True New Life with the Risen Christ at Easter and henceforth, through some of the most beautiful seasons of the year. And, indeed, a time of truly uplifting inspiration.

As a Postscript, and on a more humorous note: I am **not** committing myself to confessing about my fasting regime, or my almsgiving!

In Praise of Hymns - The Writers of the Words – John Mason Neale

by Charles Moseley

The *New English Hymnal*'s Index of Authors credits John Mason Neale with 39 hymns by him, or translated by him, far and away more than anyone else there represented: even the prolific Charles Wesley only has 26. We so easily take the writer of the words for granted as we sing: yet Neale gave us so many well-crafted favourites that he deserves some serious attention. How many know that he wrote, as a



St
Stephen's
day carol,
*Good King
Wenceslas?*
How many
know that
we owe
him
*Christian
dost thou
see them?*
(65), *The
Royal
Banners*

forward go (79), *Come ye faithful, raise the strain* (106), *The day of Resurrection* (117), *Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come* (139), *Stars of the morning, so gloriously bright* (193), *Christ is made the sure foundation* (205), and many others? There are also many we don't often sing, and perhaps should. For there is not one that does not have something serious, even profound, to say in decent verse: which is a great deal better than some of the modern, 'approachable', limping doggerel that has been welcomed into too many modern hymn collections.



His life was short: 1818-66. The family was intellectually distinguished, and of pronounced Evangelical persuasion. Through his mother he descended from John Mason (1645-94), vicar of Water Stratford, whom I may discuss in another of these short essays. His father died when he was five, and his mother managed much of his education, part of which was also at Sherborne College. He was a Scholar of Trinity, Cambridge, was regarded as the cleverest man of his year, and won the Seatonian Prize for religious poetry eleven times.

But Cambridge's rule then was that if you were not placed in the Mathematical Tripos you could not take Honours in the Classical, and since Neale hated the maths at which his father (of St John's) had excelled, he had to put up in 1840 with an Ordinary degree. However, he had won the Members' Prize in Classics, and was made Fellow and Tutor of Downing. Ordained in 1841, he married in 1842 - which meant, under the old Statutes, that he had to resign his Fellowship. In 1843 he was given the living of Crawley (Sussex). But



his always poor health now developed into serious lung trouble, forcing him to spend a year in Madeira. His health precluded normal parish ministry; and his support of Newman and the controversial Oxford Movement – starting in undergraduate days in a strongly Evangelical University – made

ecclesiastical preferment unlikely. In 1846 Lord Delaware presented him to the Wardenship of Sackville College in East Grinstead (left), a

retirement home for poor men. He served there faithfully, expanded Sackville's ministry to include indigent women and orphans, and founded the Sisterhood of St. Margaret, eventually one of the finest training orders for nurses. His churchmanship, and his radical support of the poor, made him enemies, and even his Bishop made things difficult. Unfounded rumours of misconduct and embezzlement were circulated about this learned and gentle man.

Despite his health, his scholarly and charitable work was prodigious. He wrote extensively on liturgy and church history (including the Orthodox church, which is perhaps where his interest in Greek hymnody started). Recognising, like Keble, the teaching power of music and song, he wrote two volumes of Hymns for Children (1842, 1846) – he shared with Mrs Alexander (see last month's issue) that concern for the young. But his chief achievement are his translations of Greek and Latin hymns from the earliest times to the high medieval period: he recovered an ancient treasure without which our worship, and perhaps our thinking, would be the poorer. *Medieval Hymns and Sequences* (1851, 1863, 1867), *The Hymnal Noted* (1852, 1854), *Hymns of the Eastern Church* (1862), and *Hymns Chiefly Medieval* (1865) came in quick succession. He claimed no rights in his texts, simply being pleased that they could contribute to the 'common property of Christendom.' Some people criticised him for being excessively, in their view, 'mystical,' especially in his *Commentary on the Psalms* (1874, completed after his death by his friend R. F. Littledale, himself author of several hymn translations). Neale anticipated such criticism: his preface stresses 'Not one single mystical interpretation throughout the present Commentary is original', and this strand in his spirituality, going back to drink at ancient wells, was a useful corrective to the reductively materialistic tendencies of his age (sounds familiar in our age plagued, not by good science, but by lazy scientism). His own hymns were mostly for children, and so are rightly simple in diction, but they avoid that slide, too common, into banality.

Poems on John Keble's death and on the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (in hexameters, a measure difficult in English but then enjoying a certain fashion, as in A. H. Clough's *Amours de Voyage* of 1849) are

dignified, if now rather dated. But our real debt to him is in his very fine translations, or versions, of ancient hymns. Not only an excellent Classical scholar, he was also soaked in the medieval Latin which many regular Classicists regarded as slumming it. Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, which collected in 217 volumes *all* the Latin writing between Tertullian (d.230) and Innocent III (d.1216) was then appearing (between 1841 and 1855), and so he had access to the vast heritage of Latin hymnody. Neale loved the 'noble' task he set himself: to recover a once major component in the worship of the Western Church, abandoned in the storms of Reformation. 'It is a magnificent thing,' he said, 'to pass along the far-stretching vista of hymns, from the sublime self-containedness of S. Ambrose to the more fervid inspiration of S. Gregory, the exquisite typology of Venantius Fortunatus, the lovely painting of S. Peter Damiani, the crystal-like simplicity of S. Notker [Balbulus], the scriptural calm of Godescalcus [Gottschalk of Orleans], the subjective loveliness of S. Bernard, till all culminate in the full blaze of glory which surrounds Adam of S. Victor, the greatest of them all.'

For the medieval church, even at humble levels, made great use of music – which is after all, we are told, one of the distinguishing joys of Heaven. For example: not just hymns as we know them, but long poems designed for processions – another common feature of medieval worship: then, also, the complex sung Sequences for seasons and holy days, during the Gospel procession (they originated in the Alleluia of the Gradual). Neale tried to copy their exact measure and rhyme, 'at whatever inconvenience and cramping', which made for some difficulties. Many of them had a complex theological underpinning – I think particularly of Aquinas' wonderful *Pangue, lingua, gloriosi corporis mysterium*, which he wrote specially for the Feast of Corpus Christi, newly instituted in 1246.

Neale and Edward Caswall translated it, so we can sing NEH 268 (*Now. my tongue. the mystery telling*) with joy and as much understanding of the mystery as we shall have this side of eternity. In his version of St Bernard of Clairvaux' *Iesu Dulcis Memoria* (The Rosy Sequence, NEH 291) Neale captured something of the

emotional, affective piety that marks that great mystic's writing – and if you don't know St Bernard's little book on the Song of Songs you have a treat waiting for you. The Pentecost Golden Sequence, *Come. Thou Holy Spirit, come* (NEH 139) was written either by the great reforming Innocent III or Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. As we sing Neale's longing words, it is ironic to recall the bitter quarrel over Langton's election as Archbishop, resolved only by Innocent's intervention. That was one of the first moves leading to the civil war of King John's unhappy reign, with all England being placed under a Papal Interdict forbidding any sacraments. (There is a story to be told there, but this is not the place for it... incidentally, Langton it was who divided up the Biblical books into verses – what would we do without that convenience?) Neale's translations were almost universally welcomed by Anglicans, and some were taken up by nonconformists. But some Roman Catholics accused Neale of disingenuousness because he did not point out his softening, or ignoring, of Roman doctrines in those hymns – indeed, that his translations deliberately misrepresented the originals. Neale, as an Anglican, was aware of how Anglicanism claimed descent from Rome as Mother, but rejected some Roman doctrines after the first four Fathers and the first four Ecumenical Councils - First Nicaea (325), First Constantinople (381), First Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). As he wrote for Anglicans, Neale could only be expected to omit what would clash with Anglican doctrine.

So far I have only considered Neale's work from Latin – I feel happier there as I know many of the originals. But the Greek corpus of sacred writing and liturgy is quite closed to me, and we owe Neale (and others, like Charles Humphrey, 1840-1921) a huge debt for making accessible something of this. In 1862 Neale published his ground-breaking *Hymns of the Eastern Church*. Of it he remarked, 'I had no predecessors and therefore no master', and the preface continues: 'Though the superior terseness and brevity of the Latin hymns renders a translation which shall represent those qualities a work of great labour, yet still the versifier has the help of the same metre; his version may be line for line; and there is a great analogy between the collects and the hymns, most helpful to the translator.'

Above all, we have examples enough of former translation by which we may take pattern. But in attempting a Greek canon, from the fact of its being in prose (metrical hymns are unknown) one is all at sea. What measure shall we employ? Why this more than that? Might we attempt the rhythmical prose of the original, and design it to be chanted? Again, the great length of the canons renders

Jerusalem the Golden

ST. BERNARD, A.D. 1150. NEALE, TR. ALEXANDER EWING.

them unsuitable for our churches as wholes...’ Many of his translations from Greek, therefore, are extracts from much longer originals, and they show great formal resourcefulness, from rhymed quatrains familiar to English ears, to something resembling the Sapphics of ancient Greek poetry. His achievement was much admired, and it is in Hymns of the Eastern Church that *Christian, dost thou see them? The day is past and over, The day of Resurrection, his own Greek-inspired Art thou weary, are thou languid?*, and *O happy band of pilgrims* appear.

I must close this tribute with *Jerusalem the Golden* NEH 381. Neale crafted this out of verses from a long, long poem (which I first encountered as an undergraduate with much enthusiasm, but only moderate patience) of satire and complaint against the abuses of the twelfth century church, *De Contemptu Mundi*, by a Benedictine monk, Bernard of Morlaix, later of Cluny. When we sing it to Alexander Ewing’s tune, I confess its *Sehnsucht*, its longing for what we glimpse but do not see, brings tears to my eyes almost every time. I have asked for it at my funeral. I would so like people to enjoy themselves there.

Calendar for March

MON 1st S. David, bishop, Patron of Wales

TUE 2nd *S. Chad, bishop & missionary*

WED 3rd

THU 4th

FRI 5th

SAT 6th *S. Tibb, virgin*

SUN 7th THIRD SUNDAY of LENT

MON 8th *Edward King, bishop*

TUE 9th

WED 10th

THU 11th

FRI 12th

SAT 13th

SUN 14th FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (Mothering Sunday)

MON 15th

TUE 16th

WED 17th *S. Patrick, bishop*

THU 18th *S. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop & doctor*

FRI 19th **S. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

SAT 20th *S. Cuthbert, bishop & missionary*

SUN 21st FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT

MON 22nd

TUE 23rd

WED 24th *Oscar Romero, bishop & martyr*

THU 25th THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD TO THE

BVM

FRI 26th

SAT 27th

SUN 28th PALM SUNDAY

MON 29th **in Holy Week**

TUE 30th **in Holy Week**

WED 31st **in Holy Week**

Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death in March

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| The Church and people of Wales | | 1 st |
| Mission work in this land | | 2 nd |
| Our Lent Group | <i>Ceta Cherry, Harold Auckland</i> | 3 rd |
| The vaccination programme | <i>Christopher Barnard</i> | 4 th |
| Fruitfulness for our fasting | | 5 th |
| The unemployed | <i>Roger Knight, Mary Rowlings</i> | 6 th |
| Our Parish & People | <i>Geoffrey Clayton, bp.</i> | 7 th |
| Bishop & Diocese of Lincoln | <i>Jessie Rolph</i> | 8 th |
| Friends of Fulbourn Hospital | | 9 th |
| The sick | <i>Carl George</i> | 10 th |
| The Medaille Trust | | 11 th |
| Those unable to make their confession | | 12 th |
| Our Deanery | <i>Elsie Murrell, Helen Dex, Beryl Oliver</i> | 13 th |
| Our Parish & People | | 14 th |
| The Queen | <i>Elizabeth Lampe, Violet Barnard, Michael Ogden, Alan Gustard</i> | 15 th |
| Those suffering from addiction | <i>Teresa Pike, Jean Gustard</i> | 16 th |
| Church & people of Ireland | <i>Richard Boulind, Ann Robinson</i> | 17 th |
| Our P.C.C. | | 18 th |
| Fathers | <i>Mary McDougall, Eileen Barnard</i> | 19 th |
| Bishops | | 20 th |
| Our Parish & People | <i>Constance Hennings, Margaret Bottrall</i> | 21 st |
| Homeless | <i>Emily Glennie, Nellie Edwards, Merlin Rotherham-Brown, Ken Topley</i> | 22 nd |
| Cambridge South Deanery Synod | | 23 rd |
| Those persecuted for the Faith | <i>George Head</i> | 24 th |
| Wonder at the Incarnation | | 25 th |
| The housebound | <i>Philip Gibbens Hall</i> | 26 th |
| Our keeping of Holy Week | | 27 th |
| Our Parish & People | <i>John Gilling, pr.</i> | 28 th |
| Faith | | 29 th |
| Hope | | 30 th |
| Love | <i>Pamela Horne</i> | 31 st |

Poetry

by Jo Wibberley

My late husband Anthony always took the *Church Times*, but I never seemed to find the time to read it, and after about three months of accumulation, they were recycled. However, I kept his subscription on, and now I have time to read it weekly. Not surprisingly, I found articles by a number of current or former Cambridge people I knew. One of these is Malcolm Guite, whom I first met when he was Vicar of Holy Cross in Barnwell and brought some confirmation candidates to LSM in about 2000. I enjoy his Poet's Corner where he recently wrote about walking in the countryside around Linton. Last year he published *The Quarantine Quatrains*, a new Rubaiyat, with illustrations by Roger Wagner, and with which he raised £5,500 for the Care Workers' charity. Here is quatrain VII:



35

At close of day I hear the gentle rain
Whilst experts on the radio explain
Mind-numbing numbers, rising by the day,
Cyphers of unimaginable pain.

36

Each evening they announce the deadly toll
And patient voices calmly call the roll;
I hear the numbers, cannot know the names
Behind each number, mind and heart and soul.

37

Behind each number one beloved face,
A light of life whom no-one can replace,
Leaves on this world a signature, a trace,
A gleaming and a memory of grace

38

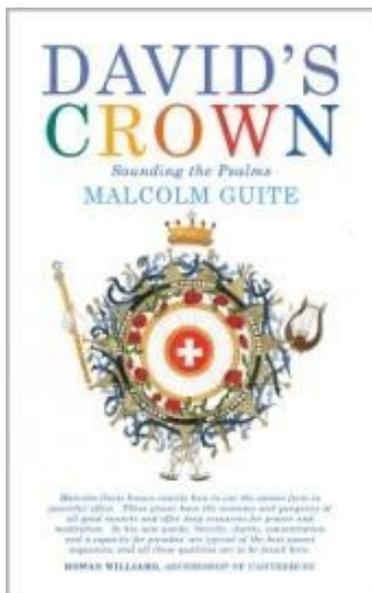
All loved and loving, carried to the grave,
The ones whom every effort could not save;
Amongst them all those carers whose strong love
Brought life for others with the lives they gave.

39

The sun sets and I find myself in prayer,
Lifting aloft the sorrow that we share;
Feeling for words of hope amidst despair,
I voice my vespers through the quiet air:

40

O Christ who suffer with us, hold us close,
Deep in the secret garden of the rose,
Raise over us the banner of Your love
And raise us up beyond our last repose.



During lockdown Malcolm worked on a book about the psalms which has just been published. *David's Crown* is a sequence of poetic responses to each of the 150 psalms

:
https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786223067/david_s-crown

I listened to Malcolm's conversations on the psalms with Roger Wagner

<https://youtu.be/zKgZ5RzELH4> and <https://youtu.be/frtUMFbesdQ> and attended the online launch of his book on 11th February which was most interesting. This was recorded and is available at <https://youtu.be/JvG9T1q4pFY>

In the preface to *David's Crown* Malcolm writes, "The poems are neither a new translation of the psalms nor a learned commentary but rather a contemporary prayer journal, an account of what it is like to read and pray through these ancient words now and let them speak into our own condition."

I am not a great poetry person, but I have found that Malcolm's style suits me. I have now started to read the poems in conjunction with the Coverdale version of the psalms, restricting myself to one a day, so I should finish on St. James' Day, 25th July, by which time perhaps the Covid restrictions will be well relaxed. I feel this will complement the Bishop of Oxford's Lent book on the Creeds upon which the Lent course on Monday evenings is drawing.

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

February update

by Stephen Barwise

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of CCHP, both for all your Prayers and your donations. This is a brief update to reflect where CCHP is at this time. As you may know, owing to the Pandemic, we could not run our Winter Night Shelter; however, we have had a good winter so far in terms of delivering services to the vulnerable & homeless in our local community

So far this winter we have housed seven men and four women. Two of our guests are asylum seekers, and Mr J, who was referred to us by Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (Refugee Services), moved in successfully at the beginning of February, having been hosted by various families over the last four years while he sought refugee

status. This status was achieved on Monday of last week. This means that he can now access some benefits as he has a clear legal status. Mr E is still pursuing clarity over his refugee status. Neither of these guests consume alcohol or drugs, and the landlady at our friendly B&B states that they are 'charming'.

Mr D moved out of the B&B recently and into a council flat. Mr D has been with us most of the winter and everybody has been impressed with his commitment to being clean from heroin use. He fought back from heroin use two years ago while sleeping rough. I consider this to be absolutely outstanding. He now has two complaints. 'I am getting fat', and 'I have so much energy I don't know what to do with myself'. The landlady advised that he visit anywhere that is open and offer to help. Mr D carried out these instructions and has found regular work on two or three mornings a week.

Mr H was offered accommodation by the council in Peterborough, but he found this unacceptable as his partner is in ICU at Addenbrooke's in a coma with Covid. Mr H visits Addenbrooke's every day to ascertain if there are any changes. This would be impossible if he lived in Peterborough, owing to the cost and lockdown rules. Over four months ago, he began his journey to become clean from heroin use while rough sleeping and this has been a great success. We have also been able to offer emergency accommodation to those who need it, including one male guest, and his female partner who stayed three nights with us until statutory services successfully rehoused them.

Two of our other male guests are in poor physical health, with **no access to public funds**, and Mr K was discharged directly from Addenbrooke's in-patient status to rough sleeping. We were successful in accommodating him within a couple of hours of discharge and continue to have him in our care.

The three other female guests had all withdrawn from their emergency accommodations owing to there being an immediate risk to their safety. One of these female guests was 18 years of age. This

is not an uncommon occurrence in emergency hostels, as these are now mixed facilities, and we are grateful to our partner agencies for working with us to ensure that all vulnerable women have access to a safe and secure environment.

These success stories have only been achieved thanks to the support of our volunteers and donors. The accommodation that we access is paid at a rate of £25 per night, (£750 for 30 nights). This is a reduction of £40 or more per night. We hope to accept a new guest this week, once he accepts that our offer is 'for real'.

All that CCHP achieves is dependent upon the prayers & support of people like yourselves CCHP is only **organised compassion**, so thank you for your support.

Christ said, "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome". We will not cure homelessness but we can make a difference to those with whom we engage.

Cover Story: **An Extraordinary Annunciation** *by Rosanna Moseley Gore*

It was on 26th September 2018, at what seems like an implausibly far-off time when it was possible to travel abroad, walk through crowded streets, eat in busy restaurants and



join throngs of people visiting ‘the sights’. We were in Verona for a few days, and had gorged happily not only on delicious Italian food but also on a seemingly endless diet of stunning 11th and 12th-century Romanesque churches – a particular favourite of mine. It was our last day, and we defiantly walked past “Juliet’s balcony” and its crowds of eager tourists, past another lot of exceptional Roman remains just a little below street level, and entered the church of San Fermo Maggiore on the banks of the Adige river. Unlike most of the other ancient churches in this ancient city, this one looked very Gothic from the outside – once through the outer door at the side, we realised there was something unusual going on – many steps upwards into the lofty, highly-ornamented 13th-century church; and many steps downwards into ‘the Lower Church’.



Anyone with an archaeological turn of mind knows that ‘lower’ usually means ‘older’, and for me ‘older’ usually means ‘better’, so we followed the downwards steps assuming we would be entering an earlier crypt. But this was no crypt – it was in fact the 11th-century Romanesque Benedictine church on top of which the later one was built. And what a beauty it was – sturdily lofty in its own way, covered in frescos, columns retreating in all directions in a perfectly-rendered illustration of the rules of perspective. So far, so rewarding – and for me, those old places are always spiritually rewarding too. But then, while wandering through the arcades and on turning a corner, I found myself in front of a

sight that has stayed vividly in my mind’s eye ever since. A simply extraordinary sculpture depicting the Annunciation, stylised yet profoundly human, profoundly humane, and profoundly holy.

Human-sized, it was possible to walk all around the figures of the Virgin Mary and the Angel Gabriel, look them in the face, trespass almost on this moment of intense significance. The more I looked, the more I circled the figures, the more deeply I was drawn in. No wings on the angel, just an expression and stance of quiet urgency – and compassionate concern. No lilies in Mary’s hands, just a young

woman surprised by a whispered intimation of utterly, unutterably inescapable import:



Confusion showed in her face, and calmness, and radiance, and an inner knowing. Her hands seemed almost caught in the act of that instinctive gesture of moving to the belly that all women, when finding themselves newly pregnant, find themselves doing. I say ‘just a young woman’, but look at her a bit longer and you can see something else unfolding in front of you, can’t you? A growing in stature, a dignity, a stepping into her holy destiny. I hope you agree that she, they, it are extraordinary. I will never see a depiction of the Annunciation again without holding this image in my mind as a double exposure.

And for those of you who like information, the sculptor was Hermann Josef Runggaldier, from the town of Ortisei in the Dolomitic province of Bolzano, and it is well worth taking a look at his website to see further sacred, and non-sacred examples of his work.

www.hermannjosef.com/en/



The Electoral Roll

The close of the year for the Electoral Roll revision is fast approaching. If you have changed your address, email address, or any other details in the past year, please let me know by **Sunday 21st March** unless you have already done so.

If you are new to LSM, and wish your name to appear on the Electoral Roll, please do contact me.

Contact details are as follows:

Email: smcoote23@hotmail.com Tel: 01223 208154

Susan M Coote, Electoral Roll Officer

An A-Z of Interesting Things O is for Oblation

‘Oblation’ (from Latin *oblatio*, from *offerro*, *offere*, *obtuli*, *oblatum* “to offer”), means an offering. The word is used ecclesiastically to mean a solemn offering to God. In the Eucharist, there are two oblations – the lesser one, also known as the Offertory, being the presentation of the unconsecrated bread and wine; and the greater one, in which the Body and Blood of Christ are offered to God.

Garden News

The garden is beginning to look spring-like. The snowdrops are nearly over but daffodils are beginning to flower as well as primroses, many hellebores (Lenten roses), a small violet and a few crocuses/croci. We had planted a lot but only some have appeared so we may have to invest in some more. Visitors can be often seen walking round our garden as it is a quiet and pleasant place in the centre of the city.

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